



San Nicolas Business Association presents a plan to revitalize the area “P’ariba di brug”

On Wednesday, June 25, Roland Peterson, President of the SNBA along with other officers welcomed press to the Astoria Restaurant in San Nicolas to present a “Master Plan” regarding stimulating business and tourism to the area known in Aruba as “P’ariba di brug,” (Above the bridge.)

The SNBA expressed the desire to involve all businesses located P’ariba di brug, not only those in San Nicolas proper, in the campaign to encourage residents to patronize the vendors in their community. Aruba is divided by a small bridge over the Spanish Lagoon, and among islanders this has always been a logistical indicator for the areas “P’abaou de Brug” (Balashi and all areas west of there, including Oranjestad) and “P’ariba di brug,” (east of the bridge, from Pos Chiquito to Baby Beach.)

“The future of Aruba lies in the hands and hearts of its people and community,” expressed Mr. Peterson, “What ever plans we make, we must make together. San Nicolas is a little town on its own that must remain as it is . Too many things have already been lost of the real Caribbean part of Aruba; of what it used to be.”

Mr. Peterson’s point is shared by many, that the building boom, particularly of the last ten years is diluting the character of Aruba, both in its traditions, and architecturally. Most development of the island has been “P’ariba di brug,” and recently focused almost entirely on the Palm Beach and Eagle Beach Areas. These being prime waterfront locations, it is understandable, but this also shifts most of the employment to those areas also. This can create a problem for San Nicolas, as the majority of the residents work in that area, and so shop in that area, as stores in San Nicolas will be closed by the time they reach home. “Right now we are focusing on the business sector,” revealed Mr. Peterson “We need to get the business “pumped up,” he asserted. “ This is not an easy task. San Nicolas over the years has become more dependent on the refinery’s activities. When there is a major overhaul, (a ‘turnaround’) there is a lot of movement. Merchants get a boost in sales and this is about the best period for business. We can’t rely only on these periods. Many of San Nicolas’ potential clients are not shopping in this area, and we have asked ourselves, “How can we change this?”

Employing the results of a survey conducted in the San Nicolas Community, the SNBA proposes to instigate the following:

- Training sessions for businesses
- Amendment of business hours, allowing workers to shop in the evening
- Creating a “cozy atmosphere” for shoppers/visitors
- Make it possible to keep residents within the community to do their chores
- Maintain a safe and clean environment
- Create something “unique” with a traditional San Nicolas ambiance that will attract visitors

Mr. Peterson and the SNBA board feel that San Nicolas needs to maintain a nostalgic character while modernizing; incorporating the best of what was Aruba, with what Aruba can be. Repairing and refurbishing the Sunrise City, while maintaining the classic Caribbean architecture that still marks it as an island dwelling, is a priority. The results of the survey are still being studied, to devise a plan that will answer the needs of the San Nicolas community, and the area P’ariba di brug, which the SNBA asserts is 37% to 40% of Aruba’s population.

Dr. Ryan Peterson, Dean of the University of Aruba, recently presented the SNBA with an “Executive Summary of the Results of the SNBA Community Survey 2007.” It is the intention of the SNBA board to conduct a press conference on Dr. Peterson’s findings, and to incorporate his recommendations in creating a post within the association devoted to public relations for the area. A website about San Nicolas has just been completed and will online soon.

A new bus station for San Nicolas is also nearly completed, and the SNBA plans to relocate in the office complex that will be a part of the terminal. Other immediate plans for the stimulation of commerce are workshops for new businesses, a SNBA General Members Meeting on September 6, to which all the community is invited to attend, and a fund raising dinner with noted guest speakers in the last quarter of 2007.

Finally, Mr. Peterson expressed gratitude to a number of organizations and the San Nicolas Police in making a supreme effort to revitalize the San Nicolas area and so make it more attractive to visitors and

residents. This included Valero Refinery and their steadfast support of the area and the Visibility Team, and the Y.M.C.A. and their "Love Thy Neighbor" program.

The main thrust of Wednesday's presentation was that it is a community effort to maintain and appreciate the viability of San Nicolas, what it has been and what it can be, and the SNBA is there to provide guidance and assistance to citizens and businesses wishing to make that effort and get involved. For more information about membership and services of the SNBA contact Vice President Eudora Peters at telephone # 584-6120 or e-mail dfs@setarnet.aw.